

## Contact Isolation

### What is contact isolation?

Contact isolation is a combination of practices used to prevent germs from spreading in the hospital. Germs are spread directly by skin-to-skin contact or indirectly by touching contaminated door knobs, hand rails, medical equipment, and other objects in a patient's surroundings. Germs on objects in your surroundings can be removed by cleaning with disinfectant. Germs can be carried by a person without causing an infection; this is called "colonization." If you have an infection, your doctor will treat it. If you are colonized, it may not need treatment. In both situations, good hand hygiene will reduce the spread of germs.

### Why are you on contact isolation?

Test results show that you have:

- ☐ Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)
- ☐ *C. difficile*
- ☐ Vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus* (VRE)
- ☐ ESBL bacteria
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Important things to know

- Read "Patient Information—Hand Hygiene."

### Hand Hygiene

*Hand hygiene* is the most important way to prevent the spread of germs. Wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol hand rub often. Ask your care providers and visitors to clean their hands frequently.

### Patients

#### Gowns and gloves

- Staff will wear a gown and gloves when they are in your room.

#### Before you leave your room

- Talk to your nurse—a staff member must accompany you outside your room. You can leave your room with a staff member for tests and procedures.
- Clean your hands right before you leave your room.
- Do not go to public areas in the hospital (such as the cafeteria, library, gift shop, cafe), or The Children's Inn, Family Lodge, Cloisters apartments, or Woodmont House.
- Do not visit any other patients. Other patients may not visit you.
- Participation in organized activities must be approved by the Hospital Epidemiology Service. Ask your nurse if you want to attend organized activities.

**If you need...**

- To wash your clothes, ask your nurse and he or she will explain the process and provide laundry soap.
- Linens, snacks, or a drink, please do not go and get these items yourself. Your nurse can help, or a family member or visitor can get these after they clean their hands.
- Your meal and have not received your meal, ask your nurse if it arrived. Once food has been in your room, it cannot be brought out for reheating so it will be kept outside your room until you are ready to eat.

## Family and visitors

### Gowns and gloves

- Put on a gown and gloves when assisting with patient care activities (such as dressing changes, bathroom hygiene, or bathing).

### Personal items

- Personal items that cannot be disinfected or discarded (such as bags, coats, cell phones, laptops) should not be brought into the room.
- Once food has been in the room, it cannot be brought out for reheating. Do not bring food or drinks out of the room.

### Leaving the isolation room

- Remove your gown and gloves (if applicable) upon leaving the room.
- Clean your hands right after leaving the room.
- Do not visit any other patients.
- You may visit the public areas of the hospital (such as cafeteria, library, gift shop, and cafe) without the patient.
- You may go to The Children's Inn, Family Lodge, Cloisters apartments or Woodmont House without the patient.

## When will isolation end?

- You may be on isolation for a few hours or for several months. Your care provider will tell you when your isolation ends.
- You will be on isolation as an inpatient and outpatient until the Hospital Epidemiology Service determines that isolation is no longer needed.
- Isolation does not determine the length of your hospital stay.

## Be informed. Be empowered. Be prepared.

### Questions?

Ask your nurse, doctor, or call the Hospital Epidemiology Service at 301-496-2209.

For more information visit the NIH Clinical Center's Patient Portal:

[http://patientportal.cc.nih.gov/pt\\_care/patient\\_infection\\_control.shtml](http://patientportal.cc.nih.gov/pt_care/patient_infection_control.shtml)

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Questions about the Clinical Center?  
<http://www.cc.nih.gov/comments.shtml>  
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